

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

24 April 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Morning Meeting of 24 April 1969

The Director noted that General Cushman has been confirmed and that the swearing-in ceremony will be held at the White House at an undetermined date.

ADD/I provided the Director with a blind memorandum on anti-Americanism in Turkey.

ADD/I rendered a negative Task Force report.

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Godfrey reported that, according to a recent conversation with Colonel Haig, Mr. Kissinger has not yet focused on a possible rescheduling of the time of distribution of the PDB.

Carver called attention to the item in today's Washington Post on the defection of the head of a Viet Cong leadership team. He commented that the defector is for real.

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[REDACTED]

Maury noted steps taken to limit access to the transcript of the Director's testimony yesterday before the Senate Disarmament Subcommittee.

Maury noted that the requirement to brief Senator Gaylord Nelson is still pending.

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[REDACTED]

*Bross reported that General Maxwell Taylor is disturbed over the Secretary of State's statement regarding the Soviet SS-9 shot in the Pacific. General Taylor has requested a fact sheet on this matter.

*Bross noted that General Taylor wishes the three newly created PFIAB panels to receive a Soviet/ChiCom weapons threat briefing on 29 April, 3 May, and 8 May respectively. The Director concurred and asked to be advised of who will undertake the briefing.

DD/S&T noted that he anticipates no problems in providing answers to the questions raised at yesterday's hearing and that written responses will be provided to the Director for his review.

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[REDACTED]

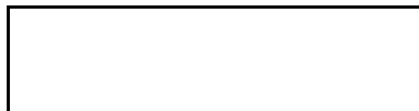
The Director complimented DD/S&T and Bruce Clarke on their outstanding participation in yesterday's briefing.

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*The Director noted receipt of an invitation to provide a participant to explain the role of CIA to a meeting of the World Affairs Council, organized by Thomas Sorensen. After some discussion the Director asked Goodwin to prepare an appropriate negative response.



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L. K. White

*Extracted and sent to action officer

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The Washington Post

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1969

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VC Probe Rising Defections in Delta

By David Hoffman

Washington Post Foreign Service

SAIGON, April 23—The Communist high command recently dispatched a "leadership team" to investigate why large numbers of Vietcong have been defecting in the Mekong Delta, according to U.S. officials.

On reaching South Vietnam the head of the leadership team reportedly defected.

Interrogated by allied intelligence, the defector reported that about 50 per cent of new Vietcong recruits were rallying to the government in the Mekong Delta. The defector, a former battalion commander, cited two reasons for this:

• Impressment of home guerrillas into roving Communist battalions. Like

most South Vietnamese peasants, the Vietcong prefer to live and fight near their ancestral homes. As main-force Vietcong units are drained of manpower, more and more local guerrillas are being transferred outside their native provinces to flesh out maneuver battalions. Rather than leave home, many are rallying to the government, the defector said.

• Continued intense fighting with no clearcut objective. Prior to the Paris peace talks, Delta Communists reasoned that victory was attainable only on the battlefield. Many now foresee a negotiated settlement. Anticipating it, they balk at fighting frequently, choose to defect instead.

For security reasons, U.S. intelligence is withholding the defector's name while evaluating his credentials. It appears, however, that the defector, a Vietcong captain who surrendered April 16, was sent to Kiengiang Province by the Communist Central Office for South Vietnam.

His mission was to bolster morale, shore up discipline and decrease the defection rate in Communist Military Region 3, which embraces much of the Mekong Delta. According to the Communist captain, one of every three Vietcong in the region was suffering from a severe morale problem.

His mission was to bolster morale, shore up discipline and decrease the defection rate, which began last fall

and has continued unabated ever since.

During Communist offensives in past years the number of Communist defectors dropped dramatically.

But during the offensive that began Feb. 22, the rate dipped but slightly. In the week ending April 19, 979 Communists turned themselves in to the government—671 of them in the Delta.

But some U.S. pacification workers predict that with the onslaught of monsoon rains in the Delta the defection rate will decrease, at least for the duration of the wet season. They reason that the rains ended early last fall, damaging the rice fields and that many Vietcong rallied for want of work or food.

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